The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-51. (Canceled)

52. (currently amended) A method for treating at least one of sleep apnea and snoring in a human or an animal having an oropharyngeal region with lateral and posterior walls, a valecullar space and an epiglottis, the method comprising:

providing an appliance in [the] or radially outwardly from the lateral and posterior walls of an oropharyngeal region of ~~the~~ a human or animal, the appliance ~~located in the oropharyngeal region~~ so provided being effective in treating at least one of sleep apnea and snoring ~~during natural sleep of the human or animal~~.

53. (currently amended) The method of claim 52 wherein the appliance, when ~~located in the oropharyngeal region~~ so provided, is effective in maintaining patency of the oropharyngeal region during natural sleep of the human or animal without causing substantial interference with at least one natural function of the epiglottis.

54. (original) The method of claim 52 wherein the step of providing includes inserting the appliance into the oropharyngeal region while the appliance is in a first configuration and allowing the appliance to reconfigure to a second configuration within or in proximity to the oropharyngeal region.

55. (currently amended) The method of claim [[50]] 52 wherein the step of providing includes inserting the appliance into the oropharyngeal region through a mouth or a nose of ~~the person~~ a human or animal.

56-65. (canceled)

66. (new) The method of claim 52 wherein the providing step includes placing the appliance in or beneath the mucosal layer of the lateral and posterior walls of the oropharyngeal region.

67. (new) The method of claim 52 wherein the providing step includes placing the appliance completely across the posterior wall of the oropharyngeal region.

68. (new) The method of claim 52 wherein the providing step includes providing the appliance in a deformed first configuration, inserting the appliance into the oropharyngeal region and allowing the appliance to reconfigure to a deployed second configuration within the oropharyngeal region.

69. (new) The method of claim 67 wherein a deployment assembly including at least one tube in which the appliance is located is employed to insert the appliance in the oropharyngeal region.

70. (new) The method of claim 52 wherein the appliance, when so provided, has at least two substantially laterally positioned elements substantially longitudinally spaced apart from each other with at least one of the elements extending across the posterior wall of the oropharyngeal region.

71. (new) The method of claim 70 wherein the at least two elements are coupled together.

72. (new) The method of claim 70 wherein the at least two elements are portions of the same structure.

73. (new) The method of claim 70 wherein the appliance has a lateral dimension and a longitudinal dimension perpendicular to the lateral dimension which is less than the lateral dimension when the appliance is so provided.

74. (new) The method of claim 70 wherein the appliance is sized and structured so that each of the at least two elements extend across the posterior wall and at least a portion of one of the lateral walls when the appliance is so provided.

75. (new) The method of claim 70 wherein the appliance is sized and structured so that the at least two elements extend across the posterior wall and at least a portion of both of the lateral walls when the appliance is so provided.

76. (new) The method of claim 70 wherein the appliance has an open concave loop configuration when so provided.

77. (new) The method of claim 52 wherein the appliance, when so provided, is effective to support or reinforce the oropharyngeal region without reacting with tissue in the oropharyngeal region.

78. (new) The method of claim 52 wherein the appliance comprises resilient wire.

79. (new) The method of claim 52 wherein the appliance is made of a biocompatible metal.

80. (new) The method of claim 52 wherein the appliance is made of an elastic spring memory material.

81. (new) The method of claim 52 wherein the appliance is made of nitinol.

82. (new) An apparatus for treating at least one of sleep apnea and snoring in a human or animal having an oropharyngeal region with lateral and posterior walls, the apparatus comprising:

an appliance comprising two elongated curved elements each having a substantially circular dimension between a first end and a second end extending through more than 90^0 of a circle, the two elements being coupled together at respective first and second ends, and being spaced apart from each other between the first and second ends, the appliance being sized and structured to be placed in or radially outwardly from the lateral and posterior walls of an oropharyngeal region of a human or animal with the length of at least one of the elongated elements extending generally laterally across the posterior wall and, when so placed, being effective in treating at least one of sleep apnea and snoring.

83. (new) The apparatus of claim 82 wherein the substantially circular dimension between the first and the second ends extends through at least 180° of a circle.

84. (new) The apparatus of claim 82 wherein each of the curved elements has a curved length extending from the first end

to the second end, and the first end and the second end define a gap therebetween extending outwardly away from the first and second curved elements having a gap length which is reduced relative to the curved length of each of the curved elements.

85. (new) The apparatus of claim 82 wherein each of the two elongated elements comprises a resilient wire.

86. (new) The apparatus of claim 82 wherein the appliance comprises a substantially C-shaped structure.

87. (new) The apparatus of claim 82 wherein the two elongated elements are portions of the same structure.

88. (new) The apparatus of claim 82 wherein the appliance has a lateral dimension defined by the distance between the first and second ends and a maximum longitudinal dimension perpendicular to the lateral dimension which is less than the lateral dimension.

89. (new) The apparatus of claim 82 wherein the appliance has a concave loop configuration when the appliance is so placed in an oropharyngeal region.

90. (new) The apparatus of claim 82 wherein the appliance is made of a biocompatible metal.

91. (new) The apparatus of claim 82 wherein the appliance is made of an elastic spring memory material.

92. (new) The apparatus of claim 82 wherein the appliance is made of nitinol.